

MAYOR ADVOCATES EIGHTY-CENT GAS

(Continued from First Page.)

chasing agent and paymaster. In these recommendations I fully concur.

The Health Department.

The report of the Board of Health was prepared by Dr. C. C. Levy, Chief Health Officer, with his usual care, and is of great interest and value. The number of deaths in Richmond last year was 2,718, or 169 less than during the previous year. The ratio, including non-residents, of deaths per 1,000 inhabitants, was 21.02, or 1.00 less than in 1910. This is the lowest death rate for the past five years, except for the year 1909. Consumption and other diseases of the respiratory organs lead the list, but there was a slight decrease in each year. Typhoid fever has the lowest death rate ever recorded in the city. Fatal malaria is practically unknown in the city. There has been a great decline in the number of deaths from diphtheria. Before the discovery and use of antitoxin, about 80 per cent of those attacked by this disease died; now about 50 per cent of these patients recover.

Work of the Visiting Nurses is highly commended, and the Health Board thinks there should be a corps of these nurses immediately connected with the Health Department. The Tuberculosis camp is an institution which deserves more liberal support from the city. It is a place where patients are treated during the day and with beneficial results in many cases. J. G. Tinsley has erected an additional building containing four rooms, two for nurses' quarters, and two for advanced cases, and the Ladies' Association of Glinter Park has done important work in aid of the institution. The board asks an appropriation of \$5,000 for the maintenance of the camp.

The City's Death Rate.

The health report shows the great disproportion between deaths of white and colored residents of the city. With a white population of 51 per cent, and a colored population of 49 per cent, the number of deaths were, white, 1,377, and colored, 1,341. Among the whites there were 460 more births than deaths, while among the colored the births were 278 less than the deaths. This to some extent may be due to insufficient returns of the births of colored children, but will not altogether account for the disparity. From the face of the returns it would therefore appear that the colored race is dying out.

Consumption was the cause of 14 per cent of the deaths among the

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whites and 21 per cent of deaths among the colored. The average age at the time of death was, whites, forty years and eleven months; colored, twenty-nine years and seven months.

Dr. Levy reports continued harmony between the milkmen and the department, and says that the sanitary quality of our drinking water is all that could be desired. He pays an appropriate tribute to the late William T. Holdsworth, Inspector of Milk and Food Supplies, who died on February 18, 1911.

The Superintendent of the Street Cleaning Department reports that he is collecting ashes, garbage and trash from 26,400 houses, cleaning 1,400 street basins, eleven square miles of streets and alleys, conducting a dog pound, filling up unused wells and caring for all drinking fountains and water troughs.

The Price of Gas.

The output of gas during the year amounted to 328,154,206 cubic feet, which, added to the amount on hand at the beginning of the year, was 431,931,139.

Loss by leakage . . . 42,530,142

Used by the city and at the works . . . 19,761,000

Balance on hand December 31, 1911 . . . 2,285,857

84,920,856

Leaving as the amount sold to private consumers . . . 43,112,094

The receipts for gas, including delinquent bills, were \$119,934.25

Received from sale of coke . . . 19,643.71

and other receipts . . . 1,421,915.56

The costs of production are given in detail.

Can Gas Be Sold at 50 Cents?

From this exhibit I recommend that the price of gas be reduced from 30 cents to 25 cents per 1,000 cubic feet. The figures will show that the works will be self-sustaining if gas should be sold at that reduced price.

Present Rate Is Unjust.

Gas consumers pay their taxes like other citizens and are required to impose upon them additional burdens for the support of the government. And I believe this reduction will be wise from a business standpoint. Notwithstanding the increasing use of electricity, the use of gas, chiefly as fuel, is also increasing every year. The cost of the production decreases in proportion to the volume of output. The present works are capable of producing one-third more gas than was manufactured last year. The present cost of gas at the burner, after making every charge, is 32 cents per 1,000 cubic feet. If the consumption can be increased to 750,000 cubic feet, then the cost at the burner will be reduced to 64.78 cents per 1,000 cubic feet, and show a net profit of about \$75,000. And this will be in addition to the interest, redemption and taxes which the city will receive.

The Water Department.

The report of the Superintendent of the Water Works, with the reports of his subordinates and the tables annexed, is a voluminous document, giving in detail the work of the department during the year, together with the location of water mains, the plugs, etc. The reports of the Auditor and Treasurer show that the receipts from the Water Department were \$144,623.82 in excess of expenditures, not including, however, the appropriations for new machinery, additions and extensions. In order to determine the net profit of the works there should be deducted at least 4 per cent interest on the cost of the works, 14 per cent for redemption, and a reasonable sum for depreciation. The net profit of the works and credited to the electric plant for power furnished.

During the year 56,970 feet of street mains and 1,192 feet of pump mains were laid, and eighty-six gate valves and sixty-four hydrants were installed. The superintendent renews his recommendation that a thirty-inch feed main be laid from William Byrd Reservoir, along the Boulevard, Mulberry, Broad and Bowe Streets, to Marshall Street, and a twenty-four-inch main down Marshall Street to Second Street. This appears to be necessary in order to give adequate pressure, and the work should be done. The works in South Richmond are in good condition and have been operated in an economical and satisfactory manner, but the Council should lose no time in extending our water supply to the Southside.

The City Engineer.

There is no officer in the city of Richmond upon whom a greater responsibility devolves and who is working more faithfully than the City Engineer. During the past year nearly \$1,000,000 were expended under his supervision. Held responsible for the condition of our streets, alleys, parks, bridges, etc., he is brought into immediate contact with many of our citizens, and is often the "storm center" of complaints, many of which are unjust because of the fact that he is hampered by a cumbersome system of administration and is powerless to remedy conditions.

The tables appended to the report of the City Engineer show in detail the vast amount of work done by the department during the year. Work on the sewer system has made considerable progress, 13.78 miles of

sewers and 13.32 miles of sewer connections having been completed during the year. The Virginia Avenue sewer, which will drain a large area in the southwestern section of the city, will soon be completed.

Other recommendations of the City Engineer contained in his annual report are highly commended by the Mayor.

Public Charities.

The report of the Superintendent of Public Charities shows that during the past year 293 white and 919 colored persons have received the benefits of the City Home. Thirty-three whites and 18 colored children have been born in the home, and 23 white and 167 colored persons died there during the year. The number in the home on December 31, 1911, was, white, 152; colored, 158. The average number of persons in the institution during the year was 299, of whom an average of 113 were in the hospital. The approximate average cost per annum for each inmate was: In hospital, \$219.57; in home, \$119.93, which is an average per capita, including salaries, of \$154.41.

The Department of Outdoor Poor distributed 4,551 loads of wood of 100 blocks each, and 1,298 loads of coal of half a ton each, to the poor of the city, and also 2,258 bushels of meal and 1,942 pairs of shoes. Two hundred and seventy-nine coffins were furnished, and there were 215 burials by the department. The city dispensaries (exclusive of medical colleges) compounded and furnished 6,692 prescriptions, and 450 patients were treated free at the home by the resident physicians. The ambulance responded to 3,277 calls during the year.

Fire Department.

The Fire and the Fire Alarm and Police Telegraph Departments are reported as being in an excellent condition. The Fire Department responded to 581 alarms during the year, and combated a number of serious conflagrations. The loss by fire amounted to \$297,906. A new company with eleven station men, fully equipped with a third size fire engine, combination chemical engine and hose wagon and all modern fire-fighting appliances, was installed in a new building, a single-story house in South Richmond during the year. The Knox combined automobile pumping engine, chemical engine and hose wagon has been very effective, and has given entire satisfaction. It has had fifty runs, aggregating seventy-five miles, and has pumped fifteen hours at fires at a total cost for gasoline, lubricating oil and minor repairs of only \$20.54 for five weeks. The equipment for maintenance during that time \$227.50. Many other facts are adduced to show the superiority of this machine over the horse-drawn engine.

The City Electrician and his two assistants have been vigilant in seeing that the ordinance concerning electric wiring and connections have been complied with, and in safeguarding property from the danger of fires caused by electric current.

Building Inspector.

The Building Inspector shows that the year 1911 was a "record breaker" for the erection of buildings. He reports that during the year, 329 brick and 172 frame dwellings, 106 brick stores, forty-three warehouses and manufacturing buildings, one schoolhouse, one freight depot, two hospitals, two library buildings, six public stables, three public garages, thirty-five private stables and twenty-six private garages.

The Police Force.

The police force of the city is under good management, and as a rule, the officers and men are faithful and efficient in the discharge of their duties. The force is under strict discipline and a serious infraction of the rules usually results in the dismissal of the offender. It now consists of 167 officers and men, ranking as follows: One chief, five captains, twenty-one sergeants and 136 privates.

There were 10,197 arrests made, and 6,239 persons were reported for violations of the ordinances of the city, making an average of 6,784. I desire again to emphasize the fact that this number does not represent the numbers of persons who have been charged during the past year with in-

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The health and physical defects of

pupils have been looked after with

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ins are necessary and strong

arguments are advanced in the report for

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order to bring the public schools of

Richmond up to the highest rank.

The City Attorney.

The report of the City Attorney shows that during the year he has brought suit for damages to the city against twenty-seven defendants, twelve of which were for condemnations of land for city purposes, eleven for injury to city property, and four for other purposes. He has also been called upon to defend ten suits brought against the city, and has defended the city with other defendants. There were seventy-six suits and appeals pending on January 1, 1911, which, with forty-seven brought and suits instituted during the year, and fifty-six appeals from the judgments of the police justice, made 173 cases. Of these, thirty-nine suits and forty-two appeals were disposed of, leaving ninety-eight suits and appeals pending on January 1, 1912. Thirty-six of these suits and appeals were decided in favor of the city and fourteen adversely.

The total recoveries against the city in damage suits amounted to \$1,010, of which \$1,110 was recovered by private parties. The expenses of suits, property caused by the grading of streets, thus leaving the sum of \$800 as the net recovery against the city on account of the negligent exercise of its duty in keeping the streets and alleys in a safe condition. The amount of the net recovery recovered by suits was \$3,364.21. The litigation growing out of more than 100 claims for damages, reason of the grading of streets in Fairmount have been practically settled by litigation or compromise, and the City Attorney advised that the city will never again undertake the extensive grading of streets until the question of damages to owners of abutting property has been settled.

He reports the acquisition of the Ford's Hotel property and the lots of land adjoining on the east, the whole embracing a block bounded by Eleventh, Twelfth, Capitol and Broad Streets, for the aggregate sum of \$168,000, and gives as his opinion that the title to the property will not affect the money paid by the city for the same.

The segregation ordinance has been

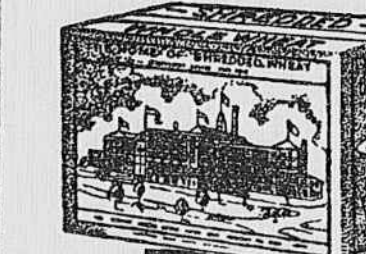


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fractions of the law, but it only represents the number of offenses. Some of the same persons were arrested or reported as many as twenty times during the year. The actual number of individuals arrested is reported as comparatively small. Not only does the number of arrests always indicate the efficiency of the force. The best officer is the man who prevents crime. A policeman who vigilantly patrols his beat and prevents crime deserves more credit than one who captures a burglar or arrests a murderer after the crime has been committed.

Public Schools.

The report of the superintendent of public schools is for the scholastic year ending June 1, 1911. The year has been a record breaker for the improvement of the schools, and every effort has been made to give the pupils and parents of the school what they wish in buildings, equipment, curriculum and teachers. Special attention has been given by the board to the extension of school facilities to the children living in South Richmond. The total enrollment last year was 12,882, showing an increase of 1,772 over the enrollment of the preceding year. Of this number, 11,752 were white and 1,130 were colored. The boys numbered: whites, 5,700; colored, 2,595; girls: white, 5,872; colored, 2,534. The average daily attendance was 12,882, showing an increase of 266. The average enrollment to each teacher was: white, 34; colored, 34. The average daily attendance to each teacher was: white, 34; colored, 34. The number of teachers was: white, 341; colored, 113; total, 454. An increase of salaries over the preceding year of \$28,675.60. The average pay of teachers, excluding principals, was \$341.55, an increase of \$65.95 each year. The per capita cost of tuition and maintenance of the students enrolled was \$13.57. For tuition, general expenses and per cent. interest on the value of school property, it was \$17.55. The value of school property is estimated at \$1,489,874.21, an increase over last year of \$170,725.65.

The health and physical defects of pupils have been looked after with material benefit. More school ins are necessary and strong arguments are advanced in the report for increased appropriation by the city in order to bring the public schools of Richmond up to the highest rank.

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The segregation ordinance has been

enforced with but little friction, and with benefit to both races, but the City Attorney calls attention to the manifest necessity of providing a larger area for the residence of colored persons. A resolution on the subject has been pending before a committee of the Council for some months, and I respectfully urge the Council to take up this subject at once and give the necessary relief. The City Attorney and the Mayor will be glad to co-operate with the committee and Council in the effort to reach a satisfactory settlement of the matter.

The Western Union Suit.

During the year several conferences were held between some of its officers and attorneys of the Western Union Telegraph Company and the City Attorney and the Mayor with a view to an effort to settle by compromise the question of the occupation of the streets of the city by that company with its poles and overhead wires. The right of the city to require their removal was upheld by a decision of the United States Circuit Court of Appeals, more than a year ago. From this decision the company took an appeal to the Supreme Court of the United States, where the matter is still pending. At two of these conferences I was present, and the City Attorney on both occasions stated in such language that he could not have been misunderstood, that as a condition precedent to any compromise the company should discontinue its litigation until the city can be forced to grant to the company such privileges as it may desire.

In the meantime the unsightly poles and dangerous wires still hang over the principal streets and imperil the lives of our citizens. A few years ago a very reputable citizen of Richmond was killed by coming in contact with one of the wires belonging to this company. This wire had fallen across the electric light wire, and was charged with an electric current of high voltage. The appealed case will probably be reached on the docket of the Supreme Court within a few weeks, and I hope that every proper means will be employed to uphold the rights of the city in the matter.

No Electric Plant Report.

I regret that no report has been received by me of the operation of the electric plant. This is in consequence of the illness of Mr. Truitt. The report of the City Engineer demonstrates the wisdom of having such an officer.

The Branch Baths are growing in popularity and usefulness every year. The number of baths was 52,625, showing an increase over the number last year. The expenses, including salaries, were \$5,167.78. The revenues from the baths were \$2,661.31. The net gain an appropriation of \$2,500 for the maintenance of the bath, but only the sum of \$2,500 was expended.

Should Purchase the Dock.

In my last message I expressed the opinion that the city should own the dock, and gave my reasons therefor, but, as the proposition to close it was then pending before the State Corporation Commission,

I did not advise any action at that time. Now that the question has been settled, I unhesitatingly recommend that the dock be purchased or acquired by the city if the property can be obtained at a reasonable price. Terminal facilities for water transportation are as necessary to a city as a depot to a railroad. Our commerce by water has declined because we have not invited and encouraged it by affording adequate facilities for loading and unloading vessels at convenient points. If we do not intend to provide these terminal facilities, then we had as well cease our appropriations for river improvement, ask no further aid from the general government, and abandon every thought of reaping any benefit from the river as an artery of commerce. With a depth of water of from fifteen to sixteen feet at low tide of the Potomac, such an abandonment would be most detrimental to the business sagacity of the representatives of our city. I am aware of the fact that in the event of this purchase a considerable sum of money must be expended in repair of the dock and for other improvements, and that the city may not receive directly such immediate returns as we must build for the future, and neglect the opportunity of acquiring property so necessary to our commercial growth. When the inland waterways, which are to connect all the cities of the Atlantic coast shall have been completed, we may reasonably hope to see a great service in transportation, and Richmond will receive the benefit of it. With a rapidly expanding commerce, and with our resources are increasing, every year, and we may not be able to pay for this property out of the current revenues, but I do not hesitate to advise the issue of bonds for the purpose of acquiring this property, which will increase our assets, promote our business interests, and in time bring in a revenue to the city.

New Free Bridge.

I respectfully recommend that the river to take the place of the Free Bridge, and that such a bridge be constructed as soon as practicable after the completion of the one now in course of construction. I suggest that the lower bridge be built in the name of "Mayor's Bridge" in honor of Hon. Joseph Mayo, who was not only of the builder and owner of the original bridge on the site, but also of Hon. Joseph Mayo, who was for many years Mayor of this city, and that the upper bridge be erected on the site of the Free Bridge, known as "Mayor's Bridge" in honor of that great Virginian, Commodore Matthew P. Maury, to whose name and fame there is no appropriate memorial in Richmond.

Some months ago His Excellency Governor Mann requested a conference with the Mayor and City Attorney with reference to the purchase from the city by the State of a portion of the block of land lately acquired by the city bounded by Eleventh, Twelfth, Capitol and Broad Streets, for the purpose of erecting thereon a building for use by the State, an informed that a committee was appointed by the General Assembly to negotiate for this purchase.

I respectfully recommend that the city sell to the State the eastern half of this block of land at cost, plus interest from the time of its purchase by the city, and that as soon as the litigation with respect to the Ford's Hotel property shall be ended, and if the decision should be in favor of the

city, a suitable building be erected on the site for the use of the city.

Several weeks ago I communicated to the Council the offer of Mr. Thos. J. Todd to contribute the sum of \$15,000 to the purchase of a site for a library building if the city would build, furnish and maintain a public library, and a committee was appointed by the Council to consider the proposition. I respectfully ask that prompt action may be taken on this important subject, and that the city accept this generous offer.

The city of Richmond is fortunately the owner of two large parks, William Byrd and Joseph Bryan Parks, containing, respectively, 200 and 282 acres. They are about two miles apart and connected by a road of which the Boulevard forms apart. Joseph Bryan Park is susceptible of such improvement as will make it one of the most attractive parks of the city, and in a few years it will become as popular a resort as William Byrd Park. I respectfully recommend that a competent person be employed to lay out plans for its permanent improvement, that these improvements be made as soon as practicable, and that the Boulevard be extended from Broad Street to this park.

I recommend that the City Council appoint a City Nurseryman, who shall be held responsible for the condition of our shade trees, and that the force and appropriations be increased in order to enable him to do this important work.

As the city has recently acquired title to the lots of land in rear of the armory at the corner of Seventh and Marshall Streets, I respectfully recommend the erection of a new armory on that site, utilizing the old building as far as practicable.

I respectfully recommend that the city acquire the lands for which the city will have no use so sold, and the proceeds turned into the Sinking Fund.

In consequence of recent changes in the ordinances and in our city charter, the wards of the city have been reduced to four, and one-half of the members of the City Council will retire from service at the expiration of their term. The City Council will be reduced to four, and one-half of the members will be relieved from the discharge of executive duties, which will devolve upon an executive board of five members, to be elected by the people from the city at large. This is therefore an appropriate occasion, and I cannot close this communication without expressing my high appreciation of the intelligent, honest and faithful manner in which the members of the Council have discharged their duties. To these patriotic gentlemen the thanks of all our people are due.

Very respectfully,

D. C. RICHARDSON,

Mayor.

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